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CHRISTIAN COURIER
A Reformed Weekly

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53rd Ye... June 19, 1998 No. 2579 $1.07

A controversial 'Day' in the Alberta Legislature

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON, Alta. — A middle-aged man with a familiar-looking face whizzes past on a pair of roller blades. Who is he? Could it be... nah, it couldn't be. But it is.

That man is Alberta's provincial treasurer, Stockwell Day, better known for rolling with the punches than rolling on the sidewalk. But he's also been called the "holy roller" of politics, so perhaps the footgear is appropriate.

Day took up roller-blading as a form of exercise when his knee began to give him trouble during jogging. Typically, he just won't quit when the going gets tough.

The Provincial Treasurer is a familiar face in front-page news stories, and often the stories aren't very flattering.

Editorialists have described him as bigoted, red-necked and narrow-minded, and that was when they were feeling kind. But that hasn't stopped the politician from speaking out and voicing his convictions.

"I'm one who reacts to the thought of political correctness," he says in explaining the sometimes negative news stories. "People should be themselves. Unfortunately, it's easy for the media to take a statement out of context. It can appear very different than what I'd intended."

No pushover

This doesn't mean that Stockwell Day is really a wishy-washy guy whom the media has tarred and feathered. He does have firm Christian convictions out of which his views arise, and he's not about to compromise that foundation.

"As a Christian, I acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the whole universe. That's been my confession, and that of my wife and children," he says. "I believe that the Bible is the infallible word of God and that every word in it, cover to cover is true."

Day also believes that there are three institutions that have been ordained by God for the benefit of people. Those institutions are the family, the church and government. He will do all he can as a politician to uphold and strengthen these institutions.

The purpose of family, he says, is to raise, instruct and guide the next generation. "Nothing else can do it as well as a family," he says. "I know that there's no family that's perfect, but family will always do a better job at that than the government."

Fall-out

As a result, when Day was Minister of Family and Social Services, he made sure that whenever possible, foster and adopted children were placed in traditional families with a mother and a father both present. The move did not sit well with single parents, gays and lesbians who wanted to foster or

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JESSIE SCHUT

Stockwell Day has been called the "holy roller" of politics.

March for Jesus gets Christians out on the streets

ALAN DOERKSEN

A March for Jesus worship band in St. Catharines, Ont.

Alan Doerksen

VANCOUVER — Christians who march in the streets today don't whip themselves, as their counterparts in the Middle Ages. The March for Jesus, which took place in cities around the world on May 30, has historical parallels in protest marches and church processions, but is different because of its atmosphere of celebration, says a church historian.

On May 30, "marches for Jesus" attracted millions of Christians around the world to gather to worship God, witness to non-Christians and demonstrate their unity.

Dr. James Payton, a professor of church history at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., sees the March for Jesus as "an opportunity for Christians to gather and make their common

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News

Christians need to educate politicians, says Day

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adopt children, and the media had a field day with the fallout. But Day isn't apologizing.

"I need to think: 'What's in the best interest of the child?'" he says. "Statistics show, the literature clearly shows, that your chances of being raised successfully are greatest in a two-parent family. If Bill Clinton says that, and he has, nobody gets upset. If I say it, I get labelled."

Christian's duty

Day also reminds Christians that the church is not the government. Its job is not to take a political stance on an issue, but to care for the spiritual needs of its members. The members themselves, however, need to be more active politically. For him, in fact, the silence of Christians when it comes to politics is a grave concern.

JESSIE SCHUT

Stockwell Day (r.) speaks with Pastor Dennis Varty.

"Christians have a duty to educate politicians about what God's laws say on an issue," he says. They need to call, to write and to set up meetings to explain their views. They need to tell their MLA's and the MP's that they're praying for them and for their families.

The government's role is to govern, to ensure the good of the people, to make laws that protect society, the family and religious institutions. It's an awesome responsibility, and one he doesn't take lightly, regardless of what the media might think or report.

"If I don't strive for high standards, I can affect a lot of people," he says. "An auctioneer [one of his previous occupations] affects 200 people, but when I'm contemplating tax changes, we'll affect 2.5 million, and other provinces watch us, so that could affect a whole nation."

Day realizes that the government can't accurately reflect his own convictions, but he always tries to bring his views to the table, to let people know how he feels and thinks about issues. Lawmaking should take place in accordance with God's laws.

Living in harmony

"The more I understand the spiritual laws and live in harmony with those laws I'll be happy," he says.

The bottom line is for Christians to live the principles he so strongly believes. "Jesus perfectly reflects the way we ought to be," he says. "Jesus shows us what true love for someone is. Love is choosing what is best from God's point of view.

Truth enveloped in love

"The woman caught in adultery is a powerful story. Basically Jesus said to the woman, 'I love you. Now, go and sin no more.' He expressed the basic truth and enveloped it in love."

And about those quotes in the papers, the ones that even staunchly conservative Christians sometimes blush to read? Day says that Christians have a great responsibility to reflect Jesus in their speech.

"For the record," he says with chagrin, "I don't always do that."

Day's convictions and VLTs

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — Stockwell Day is not afraid to speak his mind on controversial issues. Most politicians avoid discussing their stand on abortion — it's known as a lose-lose proposition. Day, on the other hand, asked for and received a guest editorial spot in his home town newspaper *The Red Deer Advocate* to explain his position.

He says, "I told them, 'On this issue I will always speak for pro-life and against abortion, I will support crisis pregnancy counselling centres and other ways of supporting mothers who are faced with so-called unwanted pregnancies. I will never look at this issue differently, no matter how many of you tell me I have to. You need to know that when you vote for me.'"

Gay issues are another hot potato which he's not afraid to address. "I defend the rights of homosexuals, their rights are the same as mine in all basic human rights. But there are policy areas where I disagree with gay activists. Being married to a woman and having children gives me the right to have spousal benefits, which gays will not get. The definition of a family would have to be overturned first."

Impassioned and conservative stands

Day voted with about one-third of his caucus to invoke the "notwithstanding" clause in the constitution in regard to the decision on Delwin Vriend's Supreme Court appeal. His concern, he said, was not so much about homosexual rights being included in human rights legislation. Rather, it was that a court instead of the government could be making laws for the people, with whom that power rightly belongs.

In light of his often impassioned and conservative stands on issues, some Christians are finding his silence on the evils of the controversial Video Lottery Terminals somewhat disconcerting. The province has been harvesting a windfall of profits from the 'devil's television' (as *Maclean's* called the machines in a recent cover story) — as much as 664 million dollars this year alone.

It's possible, however, that Day has spoken out within caucus, and "brought his views to the table," as he says he always does on any issue he feels strongly about.

At a recent Edmonton Evangelical Ministerial Association luncheon a pastor asked Day about VLTs. Here's what he had to say: "There is no plan to hold a province-wide vote [on banning VLTs]. The province believes that communities should decide that issue."

VLT money unnecessary

"With VLTs, the province's commitment is, after a community vote rejects them, the machines will be pulled out; they'll go out on a truck within seven days, barring a court injunction. Owners who have VLTs on their premises have signed a contract saying, "I recognize that at any time, for any cause, the government can remove these machines." If the vote in Calgary and Edmonton is in favor of that, then even if it's only by one per cent, they're gone.

"What we're going to do in terms of money for the government, well, we have other sources of revenue. There is a lot of economic activity going on in the province right now; it's very strong. We can live without it [VLT revenue]. Any way you look at it, though, $664 million is a lot of money. I still think there's an intense interest in gambling, so that even without the VLTs we'll get that money back somehow.

"It's an interesting observation, just in terms of our social climate, in 1980, in this province, Albertans gambled, in everything that was available, such as bingos, pull tickets and raffles, $28 million dollars. Last year, it was 6.7 billion dollars. That's not just unique to Alberta, that's happening across North America. For many people it's their entertainment dollar, and for others it's their addiction dollar. We will still get gambling revenue, whether we like it or not, from those gambling and entertainment dollars."

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Marches for Jesus 'de-ghettoize' Christians

ALAN DOEKSEN

Marches for Jesus are "not protesting anything, they're celebrating something good," says Dr. James Payton of Redeemer College.

... continued from page 1

commitment to Christ known in a non-threatening way." It is "less a verbal commitment than showing that their faith means something to them," he says. Payton took part in a local march several years ago.

The marches benefit Christians by encouraging them "to recognize the breadth of the body of Christ," Payton continues. The marches offer "an opportunity to interact with other Christians and recognize their common bond of faith."

But Payton asserts, "as far as communicating the Gospel, the marches aren't much help."

Payton sees several historical parallels to the marches. One is the civil rights and protest marches that became popular in the 1960s. Those got a lot of attention and helped raise public awareness of the issues they addressed. But marches for Jesus are "not protesting anything, they're celebrating something good," Payton clarifies.

A very different kind of march held during the Middle Ages was the procession of flagellants, says Payton. During the time of the Black Plague, people would march in public places beating themselves and calling on others to repent of their sins so that the plague would end, explains Payton. But this was "very much the opposite of what the contemporary marches are doing."

Pentecost parallel

Clark Pinnock, a professor of theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont., enjoyed being part of the local March for Jesus this year, which drew 500 people. He sees the march as an opportunity of "getting the church outside the building" and "de-ghettoizing Christianity."

The marches are a good witness to non-Christians, who tend to react with curiosity, says Pinnock. He compares this with the reaction of those who witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the original day of Pentecost, as recorded in the Book of Acts.

Pinnock sees a parallel between that event and the marches. This year, the marches were held May 30, the day before Pentecost. Historically, Pentecost was the time when the church was sent out into the world with the gospel message, and Pinnock sees the march as an opportunity for Christians to share their faith with others. At Pentecost, early Christians spoke in many languages — something which was reflected in this year's Vancouver march. Although the march in Hamilton had no speakers, Pinnock says "the worship was evangelistic." The program consisted mostly of music and a prayer liturgy.

Pinnock sees another parallel in Christian "summer revival" tent meetings held early this century in North America. Like the marches, the tent meetings got Christians out into the world beyond church buildings.

The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches each have a long tradition of processions, which often take place around Easter, says Pinnock. Catholics also sometimes have pro-life processions called "marches for life," which parallel the March for Jesus.

Graham Kendrick, the British Christian songwriter and a leader of the Ichthus church movement, is one initiator of the marches. Many of the marches featured the music of Kendrick and his band, which produced a March for Jesus CD last year called "No More Walls."

Although Christians of many denominations take part in the marches, "charismatic Pentecostals [are] on the front edge of it," observes Pinnock, who is a Baptist. Pinnock believes the marches are a good way to build unity among Christians.

The reaction of non-Christians to the marches is often "one of interest and surprise," says Dave Carson, who organized the Vancouver march. "Basically, Christians hide in their churches. March for Jesus gets the church outside of its walls.... It's an incredible display of unity."

World's largest street event

Carson, who is pastor of First Century Church in Burnaby, B.C., calls the annual march "the world's largest street event." This year's march drew 8,000 participants in Vancouver, and more than 40,000 in Winnipeg — the largest of Canada's marches. Worldwide, the largest march was probably in Sao Paolo, Brazil, where 1.5 million people marched last year, says Carson.

The theme of Canada's marches was "Jesus: The Way Back Home," which Carson describes as "a clear reference to the return of the Prodigal Son to the Father." It is "an appeal to those who don't know God to come back to the family."

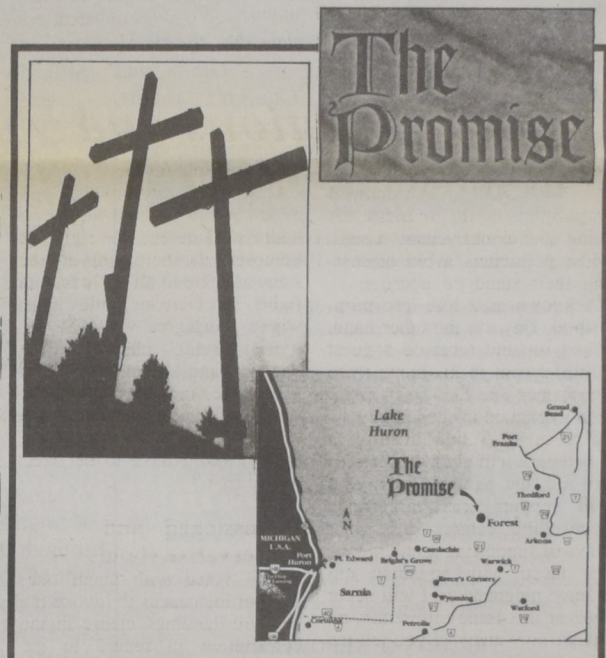
Carson saw the march as an opportunity to evangelize non-Christians. He and others spoke to the crowd, presenting a clear gospel message, after which "five people came forward to receive Jesus Christ. They were clearly [making] first-time decisions," reports Carson.

Another important aspect of the Vancouver march was that "it was a very multiethnic display," says Carson. Participants represented "a tremendous variety of denominations and ethnic groups.... We had a dozen different pastors pray in their own language."

Ruth Wall, who co-ordinated the Winnipeg march, called it "awesome." This year's march drew 5,000 people more than last year's turnout of 35,000.

March participants were asked to pray for the persecuted church in Peru, says Wall. Participants also prayed for the cities in which they marched.

Unlike Carson, Wall does not see witnessing as a key purpose of the annual march. "We don't really march for non-Christians," she says. "There's really only one agenda and that's to worship Christ." However, some participants handed out Christian tracts to onlookers, says Wall, who attends Gateway Christian Community, a non-denominational church in Winnipeg.



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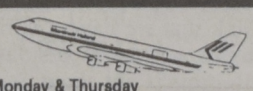

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Editorial

Will the United Church bear a faithful witness?

On Pentecost Sunday, a litany developed by Christian Reformed World Missions asked all those congregations who used their Pentecost bulletin cover to say "May we, your church, boldly proclaim throughout the world the good news of new life in Jesus Christ." It was an appropriate reading. After all, that's what Pentecost is all about — boldly proclaiming the Good News.

But on the way to church I had been listening to a CBC radio program which featured a discussion with Bill Phipps, moderator of the United Church of Canada. It struck me that what Phipps had to say about the church's task to evangelize stood in stark contrast to what Pentecost stands for. According to Phipps and to a document that the leadership of the United Church hopes will be approved at this year's general council (we would call it a "synod"), church members should stop trying to convert Jews to Christianity.

Many revelations

"Christianity does not supersede Judaism" Phipps is quoted as saying in a *Globe and Mail* story. The United Church's report, entitled *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today,* considers the view that the gospel is superior to Judaism to be anti-Semitic. So to target Jews as being in need of salvation, as does the organization Jews for Jesus, for example, is considered hateful and not in line with the Torah-abiding Jesus.

Phipps extends the same principle when it comes to evangelizing Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, by the way. In the radio talk, he said that we may share with them how God has transformed us, how our relationship with Jesus gives meaning to our lives, but then we should invite them to tell us how their faith inspires them. And in that amicable process of sharing faiths, we will discover that God reveals himself through other faiths as well as through ours.

Phipps warns against thinking that Christians have a corner on the truth. This is, of course, the same man who last year stirred up controversy by saying that Jesus is not the only way to God and that he was probably not fully divine.

We may not withhold the gospel

The irony of hearing the leader of Canada's largest Protestant denomination talk this way on Pentecost Sunday was grating. In a feature article in this issue of CC, Michael Veenema, CRC campus minister in London, Ont., critiques some of the ideas that the "Bearing Faithful Witness" report espouses. One could write volumes about the conflict between the theologically sloppy claims of this United Church document and the historic records of the New Testament and the early church, which definitely present the gospel as the fulfilment of the Old Testament ways. The Jews of Jesus' and Paul's days had no difficulty recognizing the challenge to their faith, even though the relationship was not one of contrast but of completion.

No doubt the Christian Church has nurtured its share of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. It is wrong to speak disparagingly of anyone's faith and religious group. Nor should we target religions, as such, when we preach the gospel. But we should not withhold from the citizens of this world, whether Jew, Hindu or Muslim, the good news that Jesus is the only way to the Father. To not boldly preach that message would be a denial of the heart of the gospel.

A lot of what Phipps says *sounds* right. We should not think that we have a corner on the truth. Nor should we cast aspersions on other faiths. Fine. But this is not about us. It's about Jesus and his claim that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and that no one can come to the Father but through him.

During the radio discussion, Phipps talked about "transforming the world." He explained what he means by that. We must oppose racism and sexism, he said. Perhaps he would add to these the term "faithism"? Transforming the world seems to be a matter of changing attitudes and behaviors.

Fighting all the "isms" of the world is a big task, and, it seems, a noble task. What Christian is not opposed to materialism, sexism, racism and consumerism as a way of life? But is the Church of Jesus Christ called to remove these *isms* from the world. Is the real enemy an *ism* or is it Satan? Are we called to change *attitudes* in the world, or hearts? One doesn't need to become a disciple of Christ to reject consumerism or racism.

By focusing on this kind of transformation, Phipps is hooking into the agenda of all those who are idealistic humanists in a society in which tolerance is considered the highest virtue. No wonder Rabbi Reuven Bulka, chair of the Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, gives the United Church document "the highest of accolades." He thinks the report is the perfect antidote to anti-Semitism. Phipps and his friends are getting praise where Jesus and the Apostles got persecution.

But spreading the gospel is not being anti-Semitic. Most Jews aren't even adherents to Judaism, so what threat is there to their faith? And those who *are* believers should welcome the opportunity to test the strength of their faith against the Christian faith. One would expect people of other faiths to think of their religion as being the best. As Brian Stiller, president of Tyndale College and Seminary, pointed out during the CBC radio program, true pluralism allows for each faith to make the claim of superseding the others.

A line of division

We hope that the general council of the United Church will reject this report outright as being in direct conflict with Christ's mandate to his disciples: "Go and make disciples of all nations." On Pentecost, Christ sent his Spirit to enable us to carry out this mandate, not in our own strength, but in his power.

Should the UC general council adopt this report, there would be little reason for any church that wants to honor Christ's mandate to contemplate ecumenical relationships with the United Church. In fact, the United Church would no longer deserve to be called a church. To be a church, people have to confess that the head of the church is also the head of the universe — "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Eph. 1: 22,23). That kind of vision forcefully excludes religious egalitarianism.

BW

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent weekly that seeks to:
- *report on significant events in the Christian community and the world;*
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Letters

Nothing fictitious about childhood sexual abuse

Bill van Dyk's articles (CC. May 15, 1998) may be historically correct, but they are every bit as sensationalistic as the topic he describes. They made me think I was reading a movie review or a report on a number of novels.

According to his articles, the plot seems to be that first there was a book that "promoted" the "idea" that "traumatic memories of childhood sexual abuse" could be "repressed" and "recovered." This, in turn "spawned" "tell all television talk shows." Then "prominent feminists" "pressured the police to charge offenders," and a "consensus" developed that "sexual abuse is pervasive." Then another book which "purported" "to document satanic cults" activity, resulted in "lurid stories," a "lucrative cottage industry of workshops, seminars and talk shows" sprung up, and, finally, people ended up being falsely accused of sexual assault.

The intent of the articles seems to be to show that a gigantic hoax was played on us, and we all fell for it. In the mean time, those of us who try to help victims of childhood sexual abuse, (CSA) including those who were ritualistically abused, know that CSA is real and that the suffering that results from these traumatic childhood events is real.

There is nothing fictitious about the pain that CSA victims suffer. Perhaps Bill should talk with a few of them so that he may become better informed.

Bill claims that people who believe that ritualistic abuse happens feel no need to be well informed about the facts surrounding CSA victimization. Actually Bill himself is not very well informed either.

I recently spent a year researching the question of whether traumatic memories can be repressed during childhood and recovered during adulthood. Here are some facts:

1. People can lose their memories of traumatic events and regain them later. These symptoms refer to the psychiatric diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Not only sexual assault victims, but also people who have experienced such traumatic events as natural disasters, war and concentration camp incarceration can suffer from these symptoms.

2. According to an article written by Loftus herself, the upshot of years of research about the validity of recovered memories is that people can be wrong in their recollections of the details of a traumatic event, but not about its essence. In other words, people can accurately recall who it was that abused them, but not, for example, whether the abuser was wearing a blue or a white shirt.

3. Neither Loftus nor anyone else has ever demonstrated that false memories of traumatic events, like CSA, can be induced into people.

4. There is no study that demonstrates that therapists induce false memories into their clients.

5. Repressed Memory Syndrome does not exist. It is not a description found in the DSM-IV, which is the classification system all clinicians use to diagnose their clients. The label was concocted by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation which funds the defense of people accused of sexual abuse. Also, contrary to what Bill writes, the term does not refer to the repression and recovery of traumatic memories, but rather to people who, according to claims of the Foundation, are especially susceptible to the induction of false memories by therapists, i.e., the people who accuse others of sexually abusing them. Thus, the label pretends to be scientific, but is, in fact, self-serving.

Harry A. Van Belle
Associate Professor of Psychology
The King's University College
Edmonton

Reliv given short shrift

Last week we received the May 22 issue of *Christian Courier* and it was interesting to read the article on page 20 reported by you entitled "Physician warns about unconventional treatments of ADD."

I would like to make a few comments about this article.

It is very unfortunate that in this article it quotes that: "Dr. Zeyl observes that products such as Reliv can be classified as foods, not drugs, and therefore are not subject to Canada's health and drug regulations." The fact of the matter is that Reliv products are patended and carry DIN numbers, except the ones which are classified as "functional foods." These do not need a DIN number; however, the vitamins-minerals supplement do carry DIN numbers because they have been tested by the Canadian Government.

In my letter of April 27, 1998, I encouraged you to find out more about Reliv on the Internet and perhaps you did not have the time to do that. I guess that is the reason why Dr. Zeyl expressed his opinion in this way. Also, Dr. Zeyl is critical of the small number of people tested on Reliv products. At least one doctor took the time to do a public study on children suffering from ADD/ADHD. I wish more doctors would do the same. All I am trying to say is, that Reliv deserves more credit than is stated in your article.

Johanna Cupido
Calgary

What's in a name? Destiny!

I was intrigued by the item in News Digest (May 15) about "nominative determinism." The Scriptures, of course, give us many examples of this, including the Lord Jesus himself. Here's my story:

My surname is simply a contraction of Augustine, and in fact the great St. Augustine is often referred to as "Austin" in the literature. The one I married was surnamed Colvin, which is a Scottish variant of Calvin.

Following ordination I was appointed to the Lamerton Mission in central Alberta, where the parish church is named for St. Monica, who was Augustine's mother. Several years later I was installed in the cathedral Church of the Redeemer in Calgary as "Canon of St. Augustine." As you can readily guess, I am theologically an Augustinian and a Calvinist.

Would it not be interesting to hear from others in this regard?

Fred Austin
Port Alberni, B.C.

Some bull and some distortion

Two observations about two articles in the May 8, 1998, issue.

About two decades ago, I wrote a thesis on the golden calf story. I pointed out that the Hebrew word *egel* would be better translated as "young bull." When I had finished my thesis, my supervisor told me that I had written a lot of bull.

I suspect that my knowledge of agriculture doesn't go much beyond this. However, when I read Bert Hielema's remark about growing organic food using "good cow manure," I wondered if he used manure of cows fed with organic food as well. If not, will he get "genuinely organic" food? Or does his remark also reflect a certain amount of bull?

Rev. Ralph Koops' paraphrase of Psalm 23 was quite witty. But without the complete context of the sermon this "socialist's-dream-come-true" version is a bit problematic. No socialist, not even a utopian socialist, had such a view of government as sketched in the paraphrase. Quite frequently Calvinist Christians have distorted the tenets of various socialisms. Is Rev. Koops' witty version another deliberate distortion?

Did he balance his "socialist's-dream-come-true" with the Liberal's, Conservative's and Reform's dreams, which could include allowing child poverty and ensuring that those on social assistance leave for another province? Is giving a balanced account not a part of doing justice? Or did the reporter fail here by not providing the balance the minister proffered?

Or were the socialist politicians absent and was it "safe" to joke at their expense?

Bert DenBoggende
Lacombe, Alta.

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.
Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 0451. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.
U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY 14092.

Subscriptions: (effective Feb. 1, 1995)	**Canada** (GST incl.)	**U.S.A.** (GST free)
one year (44 issues)	$43.50	$35.00 U.S.
two years (88 issues)	$82.00	$66.00 U.S.
three years (132 issues)	$123.00	$99.00 U.S.
overseas one year	$135 airmail	$85.00 surface mail

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.; classified advertising: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. All deadlines are for the following week's issue. See classified pages for more details. Advertising rate sheets available.
(ISSN 1192-3415) Published weekly on Fridays except for Feb. 27, April 10, June 12, July 10, Aug. 14, Oct. 2, Nov. 27, and Dec. 25.
Address all correspondence to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel.: 905-682-8311 or fax: 905-682-8313, e-mail: subscriptions: ccsubscrip@aol.com, advertising: ccadverts@aol.com
PRINTED IN CANADA
This tabloid contains recycled paper.

Poetry/Column

Things I have learned from my father

The absence of words is not silence;
the most profound sermons are practised
before being preached.
Faith is the armor that makes dreams believable.
Hope is the real, felt, embrace
of the intangible, the impossible.
Love makes life possible.
Respect comes first as a choice
clothed in the acceptance of self,
then as an attire that is called service.
Serenity is a practice
like a soothing salve,
taken and diligently applied to life,
rubbed and worked into its imperfect, rough places.
Commitment is the daily, carefully pledged , rehearsed
celebration of a covenant.
Tenacity is the decision
about which fork in the road to take
and then taking the path less traveled.
Some of life's knots are tied too tightly to untie;
grace is being able to appreciate them.
Maturation is the completion
of a life long journey.
Humor is like medicine that helps heal hurt
and makes things okay.
The dirt in the flowerbeds is the most opulent carpet
in the most magnificent of all churches,
and weeds grow there too.
Being a grandparent is like dessert,
sweet rich and worth looking forward to.
The reward of recognition like rainbows
comes unexpected and mostly in the little things;
like a child, undaunted by the shadow of death,
gently, lovingly, kissing farewell;
like the angelic touch of a stranger.
Dying with dignity is more courageous
than living without it.

My father's most precious, priceless gift to me was himself.

My assurance is knowing
my name is inscribed on the palm of God's hand
right next to his.

Willy Nywening
Strathroy, Ont.

Imajenings

Powerful singing

When I get goosebumps, I know there is powerful singing happening. Many times when I stand amid large groups of gathered Christians singing, I feel the hairs in the back of my neck stand up on end. It catches me sometimes in church, too. When the accompaniment is right and the acoustics are good. The kind of singing that you wish someone would record so you could sing it again later. Spine-shivering stuff.

But just the other night I heard some powerful singing that gave me goosebumps even though it was not the kind that anyone would probably want to sing along with or record or even remember at all.

Once a month we host an evening worship service with the people who live at the rest

NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

home in town. Usually about two dozen of our church members meet there in the chapel/dining hall with a dozen or so of the seniors. Maybe it was the beautiful sunshine and the call to rest heard by those enjoying the long weekend, but last time there were just a few of us gathered together for the service.

The singing was meager. The kind that, if I were listening to it on the radio or stereo, would have me switching dials, setting levels, trying to bring out what must be the hidden quality inside the scratchy, thin static somewhere. Or, all else failing, flipping the off switch.

Yet, it struck me: God probably doesn't hear the same way I do. So, as I sang along, I tried to listen for the praise behind the noise and it was surprising what came through.

I heard the familiar tenor voice of one of our members, strong and sure, leading loudly with the right tempo and pitch. I looked at the man singing there and I saw his earnestness in the tilt of his jaw line lifted in humble concentration.

I heard the scraw from the woman in the flowered dress perched on a chair in the front row. She rasped out words in a monotone that was pitched an octave higher than her regular speaking voice — no more singing than hog calling. Her wrinkled hands clutched the book close to her glasses. She seemed lost in the sway of the familiar tune that floated around her, unaware of the scratching song coming from her own mouth, adding to the concert assailing the throne of God. Just her damp eyes and the corners of her mouth betrayed the joy in her. She was smiling.

I heard the harmony from the wheelchair where the book lay lost in the folds of the woolen afghan on the man's lap. The words were all wrong, but he wove the tune through the piano's notes as softly and lightly as the whispering beauty of a butterfly. I looked at the bent frame of the man as he sang and I watched frailty, weakness fall away in the surge of life fluttering in witness to God.

I heard the child-voice beside me pounding out freshness, mastering the co-ordination of holding the tune (well, almost) and reading all the right words (just about) in a volume that hadn't yet learned to adjust (too loud). I looked at the child and I saw for a second the promise of newness (every morning).

I closed my eyes and heard all the voices blended together in an oatmeal of noise that refused to pass my eardrums no matter how hard I tried to swallow it.

So I opened my eyes and looked out at all different faces raising their voices. I was surprised to hear, all around me, singing so sincere and heartfelt, it was almost harmony. Each voice offering all it had to give — a banquet, meager and insignificant though it might seem.

It was then I felt those hairs in the back of my neck stand up. Made me wish someone had brought a tape recorder.

Jen Vanderbeek is a freelance write and mother of five. With her pastor husband, Peter, she lives in Forest, Ont.

Letters

Hope comes after confession

According to Michael Geisterfer, many gays and lesbians are professing Christians (CC May 15). Unless gays and lesbians confess their sins and do not continue in them (as we all must do with our individual sins), they cannot be God's children.

On what authority do I say this? On that of the Christian Reformed Church? No. On the basis of the Bible. "Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ... will inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9,10).

But hope comes in the next verses. Thanks be to God when we confess our sins. We "are washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Failing to go to the Bible for guidance — doing what is right in our own eyes — is the cause of increasing immorality in our society.

Joanne Boessenkool
Surrey, B.C.

We can't change the supreme law

Michael Geisterfer in his letter to the editor (CC May 15) is not ashamed of being Christian Reformed; he and others are ashamed of the teachings of God's Word and God's laws.

The Ten Commandments are the supreme law and cannot be changed. All laws which contradict the supreme law are worthless and need not be obeyed. Jesus never changed the law, neither did the disciples or Paul.

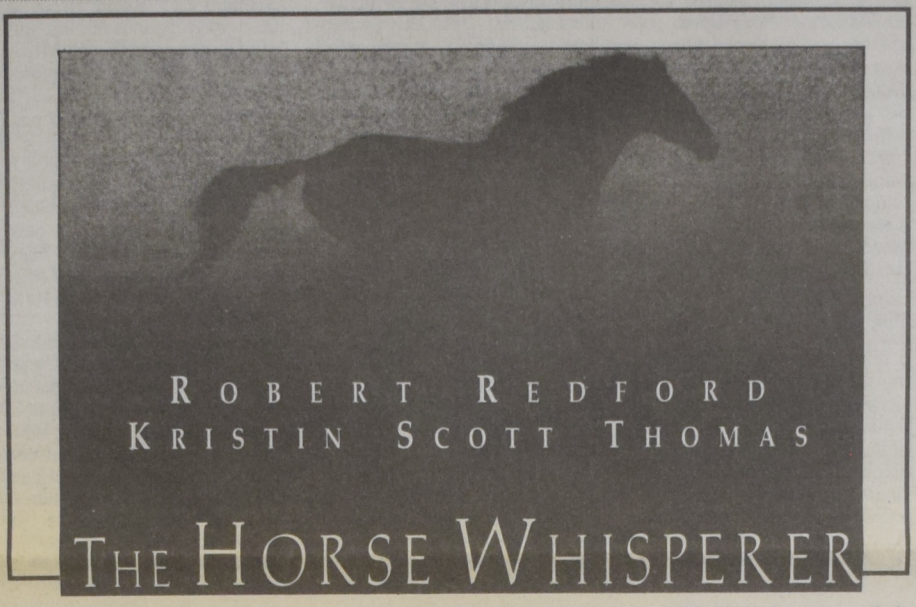
Paul urges Corinthians not to have company with fornicators. "For it is a shame to speak of those things which are done in secret" (Eph. 5:12).

If any fornicator repents and tries earnestly to overcome this sin, that person should have the support of the Christian community. Any fornicator who will not repent of his sins cannot push his will on believers who stand on biblical teachings.

John Booy
Delta, B.C.

Movie Review by Marian Van Til

The Horse Whisperer talks too long



Rated PG. Stars Sam Neill, Diane Wiest, Scarlett Johansson, Chris Cooper. Screenplay by Eric Roth and Richard Lagravenese. Produced and directed by Robert Redford. Based on the novel by Nicholas Evans.

If you's got a full three hours to spare, if you can appreciate the rugged ranching lifestyle of the West, if you think Robert Redford at 60 or so still has what it takes to inspire (behind and in front of the camera), and if you value movies that unwind very slowly and concentrate on revealing character, however stereotyped,this is probably a film for you.

Kristen Scott Thomas plays Annie MacLean, a by now very recognizable type, the high-powered advertising executive who is used to getting her way. The Exec, while a dynamo at work, doesn't often think of the consequences of her approach on the people in her life, especially her husband, Robert (Sam Neill) and daughter, Grace (Scarlett Johansson).

They are the typical urban New York yuppie family: both parents are buried in high-paying white-collar jobs which buy them everything they want except marital happiness and a good-natured daughter. At least they're typical in Hollywood films.

Won't accept No

When Grace and her friend, out with their horses at their suburban Connecticut home, are involved in a riding accident, the friend is killed and Grace loses a leg and what minuscule charm she had.

A vet advises that her severely injured horse be put down, but Annie won't allow it. This is supposed to be another instance of her controlling personality, but we agree with her anyway, and root for her in her attempt to find help for the broken animal. When, after a lot of research, she runs across a man in Montana, Tom Booker (Robert Redford), who has a special way with difficult horses, she calls him for help.

Booker's not interested. But our strong-willed executive doesn't take No for an answer. She packs up the horse and her daughter into their trailer and pickup, says good by to her husband, and sets out for Montana for an indefinite period. If Tom Booker won't come to her, she'll go to him.

Long roads

From miles away we know that Annie and Tom will travel the road from non-existent relationship to grudging respect, to out-and-out admiration, to love. It just happens to be a long road. A *very long* road.

In the meantime, Grace is going though her own time of obstinance and gradual healing. Though she isn't entirely oblivious to her mother and Tom falling in love, Tom (probably unrealistically) becomes something of a father figure to her. Her own father seems a decent man, but emotionally impotent.

Of course we don't question for a second that Tom will be able to help the skittish, agonized horse when no one else can. It just takes a while. A *very long* while. In reality, Monty Roberts or one of the other handful of "horse whisperers" in the world would have this horse under control in far less than a day. (*See sidebar.*)

'Surprise' ending

The only real (and quite pleasant) surprise here is that Tom and Annie don't actually go to bed together. Unlike characters in most Hollywood plots, Tom has scruples about bedding married women. So, except for a few meaningful kisses, he denies his own gratification (and hers), and tells her to go back to her husband.

That ending was apparently Redford's doing, as director, co-producer and star. He may have had other than moral motives (such as his age), but nevertheless, it's a refreshing turn, and one which adds some slight complexity to the characters and plot.

The real 'horse whisperer': It's a matter of speaking 'equus,' says Monty Roberts

Marian Van Til

Nicholas Evans' slight novel, from which this movie takes its title, is based on the work of Monty Roberts, 63, an American who devised his astonishing, non-violent method of training horses 50 years ago when he was barely into adolescence.

Roberts had a sheriff-father who physically abused his son as well as the horses he trained, and who once kicked a prisoner so violently (while his son watched) that the man died. Monty determined early on that he would never use, in any setting, the slightest form of violence or coercive behavior, including in the training of horses.

Roberts developed his stunningly effective methods from watching the pack behavior of wild mustangs. For many years, traditional horsemen and -women thought he was crazy, but he and his methods were vindicated when Queen Elizabeth hired him — quite successfully — to work with some of her recalcitrant horses.

Roberts' quiet, wordless methods not only work, but work quickly, for most horses literally a few hours. The American public television network, PBS, recently re-aired a documentary on Roberts in which viewers get to see him, in the course of 48-hours, gently tame a wild mustang which was never before in contact with humans. By the end of that time, the horse stands docilely, trustingly, and willingly allows itself to be saddled and ridden.

Speaks 'human' too

Roberts' own book about his himself and his methods, *The Man Who Listens to Horses,* is much preferable to Evans' novel, which draws Tom Booker as a composite of Roberts and a handful of other "horse listeners," the term Roberts prefers.

There's a scene in the film which makes Roberts cringe, and which he tried to have changed, for some reason, to no avail. It shows the obstinate horse with one leg tied and pulled up to its belly, then forced to drop to the ground and lie on its side, after which Grace is asked to sit on the animal's flank. Such treatment of a horse, which most trainers wouldn't flinch at, is totally unnecessary and diametrically opposed to everything he does with horses, says Roberts.

Incidentally, Roberts' approach works on people too. He and his wife, Pat, besides raising their own three children, over the years have fostered 47 children from troubled homes.

Roberts was recently featured in the business magazine *Forbes* and is now also in demand in corporate America leading workshops on improving relationships among employees and employees/employers.

CRC synod will be asked to allow joint congregations with Reformed Church in America

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (URNS) — Two small Christian Reformed congregations want to join with congregations of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in order to survive. The CRC Interchurch Relations Committee backs the move, and wants the CRC synod's blessing on it. Meeting next week, synod will be asked to approve an official policy in such cases. Then a CRC congregation could merge, if it wished, if in a community where such a move would be feasible and beneficial to both groups.

Oldest Protestant church

The RCA, the U.S.'s oldest continuously established Protestant denomination, dates back to 1620 when the Dutch founded the city of Nieuw Amsterdam as a crown colony, later taken over by the English and renamed New York.

The Christian Reformed Church began in 1857 when four of nine western Michigan churches in the RCA's Classis Holland seceded. The RCA now has 311,000 members and the CRC, 279,000.

Today, many communities with a sizable Dutch Reformed population have at least one church of both denominations, also in Canada. In some areas, however, once-large Dutch populations — still the backbone of both denominations — are in decline and one or both of the two local churches are in serious difficulty.

The RCA has handled such situations for years by allowing 'union churches' with other denominations such as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), but the CRC has no provision in its church order for union congregations with any other denomination.

In its report to Synod 1998, the CRC Interchurch Relations Committee proposes new procedures that will allow two ways of handling such situations. One involves two separate churches sharing a single pastor from one of the two denominations; the other allows a church to be a member of two denominations simultaneously.

The proposed CRC policies are largely based on the existing RCA policies, with one key difference: the CRC would require shared-pastor and union church arrangements to be with denominations that have established formal eccesiastical fellowship with the CRC.

The RCA has no such rule, and has union churches with denominations across the mainstream spectrum: United Methodists, the United Church of Christ, Lutherans, Baptists and Quakers.

Means of survival

While the procedures could apply to any church that wants to use them, the rules were drafted with two congregations in mind: Luctor CRC in Prairie View, Kansas, and Maple Avenue CRC in Holland, Michigan.

Luctor CRC is sharing a pastor with the local RCA congregation in Prairie View and Maple Avenue CRC is working with the much larger Christ Memorial RCA on a joint outreach project, Maple Avenue Ministries, which meets in the facilities of Maple Avenue CRC.

"An aging Christian Reformed congregation, Maple Avenue CRC, found itself as many congregations do, in a different community," said Maple Avenue Ministries co-pastor Rev. David Sieplinga, himself a former Christian Reformed pastor.

"By the end of the 1980s it was clear that that congregation was going to die, but it decided to die in a way that would bear fruit," said Sieplinga. "They made a covenant with Christ Memorial Church to bring forth a new church."

Sieplinga said that pending synodical approval, the two churches will maintain separate governing structures but hold a union service on May 31 and after that combine most but not all of their activities. "The plan is to begin with a traditional Christian Reformed order of worship for the first half hour, and then move into a more charismatic, Pentecostal, Hispanic, African-American worship for an hour longer," said Sieplinga.

"The older church will continue some of the traditional programs, discontinuing the evening service, and moving to a skeleton consistory of one elder and one deacon."

Won't lead to merger

The chair of the CRC Interchurch Relations Committee said he didn't think the plans in Holland, Mich., and in Kansas would lead to a denominational merger anytime in the near future.

"The initiative is, of course, with the local congregation," said Rev. Ed Van Baak. "Since a thing like that is acceptable to the local church we thought it would be well to create a template that would permit this type of thing. We don't expect there will be many instances of it; we think the issue is the survival of the congregation in the instances we have mentioned."

Jews for Jesus: anti-missionary bill 'religious extremism'

New version of Israeli bill more oppressive

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (JFJ) — Just when the Israeli government seemed to have abandoned the Zvilli-Gafni bill, which would have jailed anyone inviting Jews to accept Christ, MK Raphael Pinhasi of the Shas Party introduced a newer and more oppressive document to the Knesset.

Should this new legislation be adopted, it would outlaw all forms of "preaching with a view to changing another's religion," explains Susan Perlman of the American headquarters of Jews for Jesus in a press release. The penalty would be three year's imprisonment or a fine of 50,000 New Israel shekels ($18,000 Cdn).

A commandment, not an option

The situation is seen as grave by Messianic Jews and other Christians because Prime Minister Netanyahu voted for the new bill on its first reading. Netanyahu, who formerly spoke against the Zvilli-Gafni bill, seems to have succumbed to pressure from fundamentalist leaders who would suppress all religions but their own very narrow form of Orthodox Judaism, says Perlman.

Jews for Jesus executive director David Brickner is concerned. "This kind of law is more typical of Iran and other Muslim fundamentalist regimes who stand against democracy and freedom than it is of Israel," he says. "When the preaching of the gospel becomes illegal, all true believers in Christ must become outlaws or violate their consciences. The Great Commission ... makes evangelism not an option, but a commandment to all believers."

DAVID SILVERMAN/REUTERS

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu

Brickner points out the irony in the fact that "the gospel, first proclaimed in Jerusalem and Judea, might now become illegal there." He asserts, "Israeli government leaders must be shown the untenable position in which they put themselves. Should that new bill become law, Israel will no longer be a free country. Israel will have to arrest Christians for proclaiming their faith on the very streets where Jesus walked and taught 2,000 years ago."

Small minority holds sway

"Conservative, Reform and secular Jews have recently experienced oppression from ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups like Mr. Pinhasi's Shas Party," he concludes. "Observant Jews number only 10 per cent of the population, yet militant Orthodox parties have repeatedly tried to use every means to impose their form of religion upon all Jews."

Brickner noted that when Christians and others who advocate freedom of speech and religion protested the earlier bill, Netanyahu withdrew his support. "We need that kind of protest now," Brickner asserted.

Scottish bishop says ordaining gays shouldn't be opposed

Bible has nothing to say on issue, he argues

EDINBURGH (ChristianNet News Service) — Those who disagree with ordaining practising homosexuals should not oppose those who do agree with it, the Bishop of Edinburgh, the Most Rev. Richard Holloway, said recently.

In an interview published in the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement's spring newsletter, Bishop Holloway said, "I would not force people to accept my attitude, for instance, to the possibility of ordaining gay people in stable sexual relationships. If they say, 'I just can't get my head, and my heart, and my mind round it,' then I say, 'Peace.'

Reaching 'tolerance'

"But please do not oppose those of us who can get our heads, and our hearts, and our minds round it. Let's try and live in some kind of balance here. And I think one of the ways social evolution happens is by precisely reaching that kind of tolerance."

The Bishop, who is Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, predicts that the Lambeth Conference this summer (which will gather bishops from the Anglican Communion worldwide) will achieve a "holding operation, in which we will appoint some kind of long-term study group to look at the issue, which might be the very best thing."

Exclude 'intransigents'

He would welcome as a result the setting up of a "genuinely representative commission that included gay people, gay theologians, some of the more fluent and open-minded conservative theologians," he said. But it would have to exclude "the absolute intransigents, because they by definition don't think there's anything even to negotiate."

There is "nothing really in Scripture about the gay issue," the Bishop said, "but it is a big issue for people who have almost absolutized Scripture."

Church of Scotland votes to take lottery cash

No contradiction to take money, oppose gambling, says church leader

EDINBURGH (Church Net UK) — The Church of Scotland General Assembly voted on May 18 to drop its ban on the use of lottery funds for church projects. The ban was introduced when the lottery was launched and has been seen by some as limiting the church's ability to participate in community projects where such funding is already used.

A narrow majority of only 11 made the change after a long and vigorous debate which followed the publication in March of the report of a special commission which investigated the issue and recommended change.

Colin Campbell, convenor of the commission, told the assembly that other UK churches had accepted lottery funding and the Church of Scotland should accept that there could be cases where it should do so too. "There is no necessary contradiction and no lack of moral principle in opposing all forms of gambling and also putting monies distributed by lottery boards to good use," he said, cautiously adding that the decision, if it were made, did constitute a firing pistol for a rush of funding applications. "But the lottery is now a fact of life and it is here to stay for the foreseeable future."

Opposition must continue

In spite of the decision, opposition to the Lottery is set to continue. Rev. Gilbert Nisbet, a minister in St Andrews, described the lottery as abhorrent. "The lottery is particularly insidious and pervades much of our national life," he said. "I believe we must maintain our opposition to it and continue to speak against its grip on our present day culture."

Others were resigned to the inevitable. Former Moderator Rev. Prof. James White told the assembly that, deplorable as the lottery is, if there were an opportunity to use it for the benefit of the poor this should be taken.

Enemy of the proud

Chapter & Verse

● Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

"That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" (James 4:6)

Do you remember Rudyard Kipling's tale of "How the Camel Got Its Hump"? At the dawn of creation, according to Kipling, God gave each of his wonderful animals a job to do. Working together they began to prepare the new world for the coming of humankind.

The only one among them that would not work was the camel. Whenever the other animals asked for his help, he just said, "Humph!!" and walked away. The camel, according to Kipling, thought he was better than all the other animals, so he "Humph!!"ed around every day with his proud nose in the air, and a disdainful swagger in his legs.

But when God saw what was happening, he collected all of the haughty camel's "Humph!!"s, and one day dumped them right down onto the camel's back. And that, said Kipling, is how the camel got its hump!

One step too high

Proud people are a lot like camels, aren't they? Noses in the air, swaggering steps and humps of self-importance pushing up wherever they invade the company of others.

Mid-20th century Italian dictator Mussolini played the part so well. Although he was short of stature, he was long on pride. People used to say that he could strut even when he was sitting down. A newspaper once reported that "he was a solemn procession of one."

Pride is a funny thing. It is an extension of many very good qualities that God has given us as gifts. Why, then, does a great athlete cross the line from confidence to cockiness? What pushes a beautiful woman from graciousness to arrogance? When does a businessman step up one rung too high on the ladder of success and become self-important?

The ancient Greeks tried to define the transition from piety to pride in the story of Narcissus. Narcissus was a wonderfully beautiful young man, greatly talented and admired. Unfortunately he had ears large enough to hear the whispers of appreciation that buzzed through every crowd when he approached.

Falling in love with ourselves

Soon he began to believe what others said, and fell in love with himself. One day he was scrambling through the rocks of the hills on a hunt. Thirsty, he paused at a pool in the hollows and bent down to drink. But before his lips broke the mirrored surface he caught sight of a marvelous water nymph staring at him from below. He was entranced by the beautiful face, the wonderful eyes, the marvelous nose and chin, and reached down to embrace the nymph.

Yet when he disturbed the water it seemed as if the nymph scurried away. That pained him deeply and he began to cry. But when the ripples subsided, the nymph was back. Though Narcissus didn't seem to catch on that he was actually seeing himself.

Over and over the scene repeated itself — Narcissus staring in love at his own reflection in the pool — until he finally fell, famished, to his death!

The point was clear: the moment we begin to love ourselves as the highest good we lose the power to live authentically. We cross the line from piety to pride when we become the object of our own appreciation.

Beyond obsession

This is a perplexing issue, however, since we all need self-esteem to function to our fullest potential. The issue, in the Bible, becomes a matter of where that self-esteem originates. When we are loved by another, our self-esteem grows. The source of the power is located outside of ourselves and energizes us to be the best we can be. But once we fall in love with ourselves, the empowerment becomes cancerous and we destroy the very qualities that might otherwise make us lovely.

Tony Campolo said it well. When he was in seminary, taking his first class in preaching, he was already a very gifted speaker. After his first "practice" sermon to his fellow students and professor, his peers praised him up one side and down the other. He couldn't wait to see what his professor wrote.

The evaluation came back with a single sentence in red ink: "Tony, you can't convince people that you're wonderful and that Jesus is wonderful in the same sermon."

That's why James says that God opposes the proud. I can't love anyone else when I'm obsessed with myself, even if my obsession is for holy living or righteous behavior.

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

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North America's aimless search for significance

by
Luis Palau

North Americans today are more interested in matters of faith than at any other time in the past four decades. While interest in spirituality is rising, however, it's often experimental. North Americans are dabbling in all things religious, often more concerned about their experiences (how they feel) than facts (what is true).

As a result, many individuals today see no contradiction in creating their own pick-and-choose, syncretistic religion (combining different parts of different belief systems). I saw this again recently when one of my city's greatest business leaders of the century was diagnosed with cancer.

Before he died a week later, this beloved gentleman, Bill Naito, planned portions of his own memorial. He insisted on prayers from a Buddhist priest, a Catholic priest, a Jewish rabbi and a Methodist minister. Naito's brother Sam told the more than 1,000 attending the service that Bill "wasn't sure which God he would meet in heaven."

What about you? If you knew you had only one week to live, what would be your claim to faith? The bottom line is you can be any religion you want to be ... if what you believe about God corresponds to reality. After all, God isn't Buddhist (traditional Buddhists don't even believe in God; they're atheists by definition). God isn't Catholic, Jewish or Methodist, either. The question ultimately isn't who owns God, but who God is.

Lots of icing, no cake

In the PBS five-part series "The Wisdom of Faith," host Bill Moyers featured Huston Smith, whom *Newsweek* calls "a genial, white-bearded pioneer in the study of world religions" and "the original New Age spiritual surfer."

Throughout the series, Smith tells personal stories of his experiences with the six "wisdom traditions" — Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

One of Smith's best one-liners echoes throughout the series: "The enduring religions at their best contain the distilled wisdom of the human race." This is a popular but useless idea, some critics claim — sweet icing deliciously spread across an otherwise stale cupcake.

> Many individuals today see no contradiction in creating their own pick-and-choose, syncretistic religion.

Writer Kenneth L. Woodward minces no words in discounting the validity of such syncretism: "Smith's own distilled wisdom seems to be that all spiritual truths point to the same transcendent truth. Only the packaging is different. That's a very democratic assumption. After all, there is no karma in Christianity, no Creator in Buddhism. In short, ideas do matter in religion."

True, the "wisdom traditions" Smith extols do not agree with each other. Still, syncretism abounds, even if it doesn't make sense rationally. According to David Fried of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in a letter to *Time*, "One thing common to all religions is the search for truth." It's the journey that's important, we're told, not any particular destination. In real life, that never works for long.

God, the author of confusion?

In his book *The Search for God*, David Manning White claims each of the great world religions originated from a common divine source. In his readings, White says, "I encountered the beauty and wisdom of the Koran, the hymns of Kabir and Guru Nanakk, the sacred poetry of Jalal-ud-din Rumi, the moral revelations of Guatama Buddha, and the countless jewels of the Vedic literature of India. Reading these gems of spirituality and comparing their approaches to understanding God with those in the Old and New Testaments convinced me that one supreme creator was the author who inspired all God Seekers."

In an effort to affirm those of various faiths, White ends up offending at least 80 per cent of the world's population who strongly disagree that God is the author of such confusion.

Some believe this individualistic approach to spirituality may create more new religions in America within the next 15 years than the entire past century, as "newly enlightened" persons start marketing whatever peculiar combination of religious ideas they have concocted. The situation here is not unlike India, where countless religions and more than 300 million gods flourish.

In today's pick-and-choose environment, any appeal to religious authority apparently has been lost on at least half a generation. We're driven by impulse, not conviction. We treat spiritual choices like shopping at a mall. Today, let's eat at McDonalds. Tomorrow, at Burger King. As if religious choices have little or no consequence.

A personal relationship

We're hungry, all right. Our search is real. Many are finding peace and strength by opening the door of their hearts to God. Yet many others are naively open to anything.

The key is finding a relationship with God himself, personally. We're reminded of this in the words of Moses, the prophet, who said that "if you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 4:29).

In reaction to the glut of new cults and "isms" aggressively vying for our affections, a significant segment of the American population is retreating back to the supposed safety and sanity of some of the older, established religious institutions. Their search is important. Their intentions are sincere and well-meaning.

Yet have the older, traditional religions filled the spiritual hunger of the masses? No, not always. Religion exercises can wear thin. This latest trend, like syncretism, may eventually lead to renewed spiritual frustration for some.

Has religion always been this confusing? Unfortunately, yes.

Confucianism

What about Confucianism? Will it help us find God? No.In China, a philosopher named Confucius (sixth century B.C.) taught his people a profound code of cultural, spiritual and moral ethics. In many ways, Confucius taught the value of revering tradition, but did initiate several reforms.

One reform convinced the early Chinese emperors not to order the killing of wives, concubines and associates upon his majesty's death. Such practices had been meant to ensure the well-being of the deceased emperor in the next life. Instead, Confucius advocated placing clay models of the living in the late emperor's tomb.

By what he doesn't say in his writings, however, Confucius reveals serious doubts about the after-life, let alone the existence of any gods. Religious writer John Gerstner notes that, while Confucianism "pays nominal adherence to traditional Chinese polytheism and ancestor worship," it's "basically agnostic."

In any case, Confucius certainly didn't advocate the propagation of any new religions. He left that up to China's animist neighbors to the west, on the Indian subcontinent.

Hinduism

Will Hinduism lead us to know the living and true God? Hardly.

Unlike other wisdom traditions, Hinduism is a multiplicity of polytheistic religions (embracing many gods) and pantheistic philosophies (equating what is with God) lumped many, many centuries later (some say rather rudely) by British overlords into a single religious entity called "Hinduism," something many Hindus admit they couldn't define if you paid them.

Hinduism has no founder, let alone common creed. You can believe almost anything and call yourself a good Hindu. Syncretism reigns supreme. This doesn't sit well with some in the West, but in India it makes sense.

Want to practice yoga at home and meditate on your personal mantra by the hour? Fine. Want to study sophisticated Sankhya philosophy at the local university this semester? Go ahead. Want to be a religious ascetic? Admirable. Want to indulge in ritual sex? It's your life. Want to bathe in the Ganges River modestly dressed in a ceremonial red robe? Do it. Want to dance through the marketplace wearing nothing? Fine.

Want to add Jesus to the list of gods you worship? That's fine, too. Unless you take seriously Jesus Christ's claims that forgiveness of sins and eternal life are his alone to bestow — because of his crucifixion and resurrection — on those who believe in him and receive him by faith.

An aura makes you a guru

I remember flying on Air India, conversing with a distinguished Indian judge. He's very well traveled, with two daughters working as attorneys in the United States and Britain. As we conversed, I told him about my work speaking on the relevance of Jesus Christ all around the world. He looked at me and said, "The moment you sat down, I saw an aura around your head."

Later in the conversation he told me, "If you lived in India, I'd follow you as my guru." Not that I want to be anyone's guru, believe me! But my point is this: anyone with charisma and some sort of following can start a new sect of Hinduism, if he or she wishes.

In some ways, India always has rivaled ancient Greece in its religious imagination. You feel an intense spirituality envelop you the moment you arrive. The ease with which you can start a conversation on spiritual issues among the Hindus is remarkable to anyone from America or Europe who knows and loves God.

Some argue that behind India's millions of deities, Hindus worship an ultimate divine essence or presence, Brahman. To disparage any particular deity, considered a manifestation of Brahman, is unacceptable. Tolerance of any and all religious claims is a sacred virtue.

All 'great faiths' equal

The honorable Mahatma Gandhi, who did so much to free India politically, emphasized this Hindu ideal when he said: "I believe in the Bible as I believe in the Gita. I regard all the great faiths of the world as equally true with my own. It hurts me to see any one of them caricatured as they are today by their own followers."

By "believe," I think I'm correct in assuming Gandhi meant that he respected both the Bible and Gita. In any case, I'm confident he didn't hold that they teach the same theological ideas, for they contradict one another thoroughly about the very nature of God.

Likewise, India's former president Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan reinforced this concept by recounting the popular legend of the blind beggars examining an elephant: one feels a leg and "sees" a tree trunk, one feels the tail and "sees" a rope, one feels an ear and "sees" a palm leaf, and so on.

The point of the story, Radhakrishnan said: "In theological discussions we are at best blind beggars fighting with one another. The complete vision is difficult and the Buddhas are rare."

Yet if God has, in fact, revealed himself, as nearly half the world's population believes, then the analogy of the blind feeling for God is pointless. Jesus himself warned, "If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (Matthew 15:14).

Buddhism

Buddhism has become popular among some in the West, but it also fails to lead us to know God our Creator personally.

In northern India, a royal prince named Siddhartha Gautama (563?-483? B.C.) sought the meaning of life. After becoming disenchanted with traditional polytheistic and pantheistic Hinduism, he spent several years in solitary contemplation.

Upon 35, while sitting under a bodhi tree, Gautama Buddha embarked on founding a new religion of self-denial and universal brotherhood, without any reference to God the Creator or any other so-called gods.

Buddhism, then, as a philosophy without God, began as a reform movement over and against Hinduism. As a foundation for this new religion, Gautama taught the "Four Noble Truths" and the "Noble Eightfold Path," which emphasize the achievement of spiritual liberation from the suffering caused by humanity's willfulness, selfishness and lust by walking the "middle road."

Middle road without hope

In Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and other Asian nations, I have seen how marvelously this middle road encourages Buddhist adherents to be gentle, courteous and obsequious. Yet whenever I visit these nations to speak on God's relevance, people fill arenas by the thousands and stadiums by the tens of thousands. Why? Because something in Buddhism is missing: it offers no hope beyond tomorrow.

The classic goal of Buddhism is to escape this life, to become one with the universe and thus to achieve *nirvana* — nothingness. Only then, Gautama said, will we be free from the pain life brings.

Not that Buddhism lacks spirituality. A prominent element in popular Buddhism is the fear of curses and of spirits bringing trouble on families, businesses or other groups.

Like Jesus, Gautama never committed his teachings to writing. He left that to his followers. In essence, his is more a human-centred philosophy of life than a spiritual system of worship.

In recent centuries, one branch of Buddhism, the Mahayana, has considered Siddhartha Guatama a god. But as far as we can tell, the original Buddha never taught about God, nor saw himself as one. It's reported that shortly before his death, Gautama admitted he was still searching for the truth.

Only in the prophetic, monotheistic world religions do we discover that God is relevant.

Biblical Christianity

The message of classic Christianity is centred in a person.

You can have Confucianism without Confucius, Buddhism without Buddha, and Judaism without Abraham or Moses.

Christianity is different. Relationship with Jesus Christ is the origin, motivation and goal of the Christian faith. This requires belief that Jesus Christ is alive, that he is divine, and that he is still inviting us to know him personally.

In the Bible, Jesus says, "I am standing at the door of your heart and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

Confucius never claimed he could knock on the door of

Continued on p. 13.....

Should the church stop trying to convert Jews?

Michael Veenema

Leaders in the United Church of Canada are arguing that the Christian faith should no longer be seen as replacing or superseding Judaism. Their document entitled "Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today" (BFW), wants the church to stop evangelizing Jews.

In a May 23 front-page story on BFW, the *Globe and Mail*, quotes the church's moderator, Bill Phipps, as saying: "Christianity does not supersede Judaism. We are not picking up where they left off." Members of the United Church should be discouraged from persuading Jews to become Christians, according to this document. (I'm not aware that the UC has tried much to evangelize Jews anyway.) In the appendices the writers state, "The United Church does not seek to convert Jews." Regarding the work of "evangelical or fundamentalist" churches to evangelize Jews, the document states, "The United Church does not support this activity."

The supersessionism of the New Testament is unmistakable. Paul, for one, teaches that Jesus has come to inaugurate a new way.

Legitimate alternatives?

BFW attempts to improve relations between the United Church and the Jewish community of Canada. As the Christian Reformed participant in the Canadian Christian-Jewish Consultation, I have had opportunity to read the document, to hear Jewish representatives praise it, and to offer comment and critique.

A number of things can be said for the document. It raises awareness of anti-Semitic currents in our society. It summarizes the regrettable aspects of Christian-Jewish relations in history. It tells something of the continuity between Judaism and Jesus and his teachings. It expresses a commitment to working with Jews on social justice concerns. It attempts to foster a climate of respect for and appreciation of Judaism.

It is most vulnerable, however, in its treatment of the Old and New Testaments. The writers of BFW interpret the Bible as if it supports the thesis that Christianity does not supersede Judaism. Most Christians will be surprised to read in a document that claims to come from a Christian church that "If the Jewish testament needs 'fulfillment,' it is not obvious that the Christian writings best accomplish this." It is then suggested that the Jewish Talmud or the Muslim Qur'an offer legitimate alternative interpretations of the Old Testament.

Revisionist view

BFW claims that the "promise-and-fulfilment motif" used by each New Testament writer cannot be ignored. But, it is claimed, "the purpose of the motif is to push us back into the [Old Testament or Jewish] texts" and not "into new texts that had pretensions of becoming Scripture." One wonders if the writers of BFW have not missed the point of the New Testament, which is not to make the reader double back to the Jewish writings but to persuade him or her to trust Jesus of Nazareth, obeying and worshipping him.

In a rather muddled paragraph it is claimed that Paul did not see himself as a teacher to Jews. This will come as a surprise to many who recall that Paul went to many Jewish synagogues in his travels. In Acts 18 and 19 alone we read that Paul taught Jews for extended periods of time in Corinth, Achaia and Ephesus.

The conclusion of much of BFW's reading of the Bible is that Judaism and Christianity ought to be seen as independent traditions. In fact, "Jews come to God through the Torah, Gentiles through Christ."

Paul is enlisted as a supporter of this notion. Again, this will be surprising to anyone who has read Paul's letter to the Galatians, in which he argues that it is precisely not through Law or Torah observance that anyone is saved, but through faith in God. Paul recalls Abraham, the father of all Jews, who himself never even had the Torah, but was saved through his faith in God.

Claims of superiority

The supersessionism of the New Testament is unmistakable. Paul, for one, teaches that Jesus has come to inaugurate a new way, no longer focused on the observance of Law (a claim which does not make Paul antinomian or anti-Judaic either). Jesus ushered in the way of the Spirit (Gal. 4:6, Romans 7:6, Romans 8).

Matthew records that at the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn in two. This signifies the end of the religious role of the temple building (Matt. 27:51).

TODD KOKOL

Bill Phipps says Christianity is one of many truths.

It is true, as BFW suggests, that Jesus does not "invent" the Lord's Supper. But he does reinvent the Passover, diverting attention away from the sacrifices of animals and deliverance from Egypt toward the sacrifice of his own body and deliverance from sin and God's condemnation.

Paul, John and the writer of Hebrews all make the most astounding claims about Jesus of Nazareth. He is the visible embodiment of God's grace and truth (John 1:14). He is the "light" (John: various). What is said of the Torah in Judaic writings such as the Psalms is now said of Jesus. These three writers claim that Jesus must be seen in terms of his divine majesty and power. He is co-creator with and as God. He is the "exact representation" of the being of God.

Jesus and his disciples see him as greater than Moses (Mark 10:5f, Heb. 3:5f); greater than Solomon (Matt. 12:42, Luke 11:31); greater than Abraham (John 8:53f).

Excuse for anti-Semitism

As BFW points out, what is wrong with supersessionism is that it can be used to support the suppression of Jews. Many who are reading this article can remember a time when it was not considered a problem to tell jokes demeaning of Jewish people. I wonder if that attitude was supported in part by the understanding that the fulfilment of Judaism comes through Jesus and that those who don't believe that are somehow not worthy of much respect.

Many today are pointing out that in the history of the "Christian" West there has been a strong tradition of treating Jews brutally and that the church has not vigorously opposed this tradition but has supported it.

But this was not the intent of Jesus, who wept for the calamity he saw coming to Jerusalem. And it was not the intent of the New Testament writers who, although observing the growing tension between Christians and Jews, loved Jews, were themselves Jews and hoped for the salvation of all of them (Romans 10 and 11).

Furthermore, one has to ask if it is even possible to rid the idea of supersessionism from *any* religion.

Supersessionism among the religions is most persistent. Religions, as a rule, claim that they supersede or transcend or correct all other religions.

Take Judaism itself as an example. The Judaic writings are blatantly supersessionist. Their writers regard the worship of temporal powers or deities other than the God of the Israelites as sheer folly. All other deities and religions are written off, sometimes ridiculed, as worthless, although not powerless. Judaism is the true faith that supersedes all others. It is the faith that tells how God is going to bless all the societies of the world.

Looking at other religions one discovers that each one considers itself to be true to the exclusion of others regarding fundamental matters. Islam claims to supersede Christianity and Judaism in most certain and often threatening terms. Buddhism and Hinduism are incompatible with those three and claim to have worldviews that transcend those of Christians, Jews and Muslims. Supersessionist arguments are found in all religions whether "world religions" or smaller "sects."

One of my concerns regarding BFW is that its writers and supporters do not seem troubled by the attempt to rid Christianity specifically, but also Judaism and other religions by implication, of any supersessionist elements.

A crippling assertion

If Judaism does not supersede other basic perspectives on life, then why remain a Jew? If Christianity does not supersede other interpretations of reality, why remain a member of the United Church? Of course there are other (social, emotional) reasons for remaining Jewish, or Christian, or anything else. But they will not have the force that genuine religious commitment has and will therefore not withstand the global process of secularization or the militant spread of Islam.

In trying to mend fences between the UC and Jews, BFW may play a role in crippling both.

Finally — and I think this will be a concern for many Christians — one has to ask whether the theology in BFW will not alienate those within and outside the United Church who take orthodox Christian faith seriously. This document will not make relations between the United Church and many of the rest of us easier. And, speaking only as an outsider to the UC, I wonder if it will trigger a further loss of members who do not believe that Christianity can be rewritten by any number of leaders, no matter how well-intentioned they may be.

NATHAN BENN, WOODFIN CAMP, INC.

Hasidic Jews celebrate a wedding.

Michael Veenema is the Christian Reformed chaplain at the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe Community College in London, Ont., and the CCRCC representative at the Canadian Christian-Jewish Consultation.

Advice/Feature

Biune or triune?

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

The Christian Reformed Church confesses a triune God, yet more often than not the greeting most ministers pronounce at the beginning of the service is a "biune" statement, usually taken from one of Paul's letters. The greeting and the confession seem to conflict. Certainly such a greeting does not help Reformed Christians develop a sound theological understanding of the Trinity. Don't you think that the Holy Spirit ought to be mentioned in the greeting as well?

Dear Triune Greeting:

It is always interesting to see what you learn when a practice or tradition is questioned. In this case, your question about "biune" greetings sent us searching through the Scriptures, where we discovered the following.

Paul wrote 12 epistles and opened 11 of them with this standard "biune" greeting: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

He deviated from this pattern only once. In the letter to the Colossians he refers only to the first person of the Trinity: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father." None of the other epistles written by Peter, John and Jude refer to the Trinity in their greetings. There is no biblical precedence, therefore, for welcoming each other with words using a trinitarian formula.

In ending his letters, Paul uses the names of all three persons of the Trinity only once. That's at the end of 2 Corinthians, where he writes, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14).

The other 11 letters can be broken down in this way: twice he mentions the Father and the Son; seven times he refers only to Jesus; at the end of Colossians and 1 Timothy he merely says, "Grace be with you." Surprisingly, none of the other epistles use a triune benediction to close either.

If we were strictly guided by the biblical pattern in the New Testament letters we would have to conclude that Christians should greet each other with a "biune" statement and could wish each other farewell with a triune statement — that is, if Paul (or the other apostles) writing to the churches can be seen as strictly equivalent to a minister leading a worship service today.

We don't know, for example, whether such a triune statement might have been a part of how Paul addressed congregations to whom he preached in person.

We must not ignore the Christian church's long and rich liturgical tradition, either, which should still guide what we do and say in worship. Let's see what we learn when we look there for guidance as well.

In the fourth century, due to various heresies, the doctrine of the Trinity received a lot of attention at several church councils. Consequently, the trinitarian formula which Paul used once and you prefer to use always came to be used consistently in early church liturgies. You may, however, be surprised at the location of this greeting in the church's earliest worship services.

Around A.D. 220 Hippolytus, the Bishop of Rome, wrote a liturgy which used Paul's trinitarian formula as a doxology to end the offertory prayer. A fourth century Byzantine liturgy by St. Chrysostom, used in the Eastern churches, placed this trinitarian greeting at the beginning of the section leading up to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Later Catholic liturgies made plentiful use of the symbolic signing of the cross accompanied by the words, "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost." Finally, by the eighth century, the so-called Gallican masses of Gaul (France) and Spain began with a sung response (Antiphon), followed immediately by a trinitarian greeting (Trisagion) and the Kyrie Eleison (Lord, have mercy).

It was the liturgy of the Church of England, developed in the 16th century, which placed the trinitarian greeting at the beginning and the end of the service. Out of this flowed our own Reformed practice of opening the service with the so-called Votum and Salutation.

The Votum made clear that our help was in the name of the One who made the Heavens and the Earth; the Salutation went on to extend grace in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We fear that our answer may have given you a bit more than you bargained for. Our biblical and liturgical research leads us to the surprising conclusion, however, that the triune greeting or benediction is based more on historical usage than on biblical frequency. That's why you may never go to a pastor who does not use a trinitarian greeting and criticize him or her for being unbiblical.

This having been said, we still find ourselves siding firmly with you and the tradition and confessions of the historic church. Why leave the Holy Spirit out when Jesus himself sees all three persons of the Trinity working together in the discipling process (Matt. 28:19)? Besides, it's the way Peter's dad always did it, so for all these years Peter has continued to extend a triune greeting and benediction as well.

Come to think of it, if the Apostle Paul had an advice column we would be inclined to ask him why he always left the Holy Spirit out of his greetings. Let's tuck this question away as a possible conversation starter when we greet each other in heaven.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Biblical Christianity

...continued from p. 11

someone's heart. Buddha rejected India's multiplicity of gods and never claimed to be one himself. Abraham and Moses certainly never taught that they were God incarnate.

Of all the great sages and prophets throughout world history, Jesus alone claimed to be God-become-man.

Son of God or madman

Peter Kreeft says that Jesus Christ's claim of divinity is "the most extreme claim anyone ever made."

In his book *Mere Christianity*, still a best-seller, C. S. Lewis wrote: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse."

Lewis continues: "You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great moral teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Excerpted with permission from God Is Relevant *by Luis Palau (Doubleday). Luis Palau is the Director of the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association in Portland, Oregon.*

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Are we expecting too much from our animals?

Farm fodder

Maynard Vander Galien

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have (Heb. 13:5).

If you... obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit (Lev. 26:3-4).

South Africa's world-famous "SuperCow" died mysteriously a week after scientists took skin samples to clone the record milk producing dairy cow.

The Holstein cow, who was dubbed SuperCow by the news media, gave from 80 to 120 litres of milk in one day. Her all-time record was 124 litres in one day. Most dairy cows give 25 to 35 litres of milk a day.

SuperCow died before her fourth birthday.

In April, I participated in a Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) workshop and one of the topics we discussed was: Are we expecting too much from our livestock and farm animals? Are we burning them out at a young age?

One retired dairy farmer said he always liked to milk a few more cows instead of pushing the cows for very high milk production. Not many farmers agreed with him — especially those dairy farmers who want high production records and to be in the top five in the county.

That farmer had a good point. I would rather have three good dairy cows who give me 30 litres a day and not have to fuss with them (no vet bills) than one cow who gives like SuperCow.

A cattle dealer who buys dairy cows and heifers for the American market was at my place last week looking to buy young cows and heifers who are to freshen (give birth to a calf) in the next two or three weeks.

He did not want good cows who are five years old or older. Why? Nobody wants them. They won't stand up in the big free-stall barns. That was the answer I got.

Messing with Mother Nature

SuperCow had been in perfect health before scientists from a nearby university sliced off small strips of skin behind her tail on April 20. The scientists had planned to nurture the cow's skin cells in their lab and freeze them for a future cloning project with the Scottish scientists who created Dolly, the replica sheep. They wanted to create more SuperCows. The scientists were not content to just watch her produce record amounts of milk and an off-spring each year.

The cow was injected with an anesthetic in the morning, some skin was removed with a scapel and the small wound was carefully stitched up. An hour and a half later she was down, collapsed on the ground. A week later she was dead.

Many people around her were in tears. An animal nutritionist had visited the cow twice a week and had planned to conduct studies of her incredible digestive system. Her owner said her death is a loss — not only to him, but to South Africa and the world.

I have a picture of SuperCow. She was a small and frail cow. That made her milk production extraordinary. But it also made her more apt to succumb to illnesses. The cow's owner suspects his cow may have been injected incorrectly (students were working with the scientist) — there are a lot of blood vessels behind a cow's tail — or that she suffered a reaction to the anesthetic.

We should be asking ourselves if scientists are doing the wrong thing by trying to clone animals? Are they fooling around with nature?

Obsolete' animals

I know most dairy farmers will recall some of their favorite cows who stayed in the herd and produced a calf each year and milked to the ripe old-age of 10, 12 or maybe 13 or 14 years.

I had one such cow who was 14 years old before I had to sell her for the hamburger business. She was fine during the summer months on pasture, but the last few years of her life she had trouble with her feet when in the tie-stall barn on rubber mat. She came in heat naturally every year, produced a calf and lots of milk. It was a sad day for me when we parted company.

Now many dairy farmers consider five-year-old cows "obsolete."

Maynard Vander Galien farms at Renfrew, Ont. He enjoys caring for livestock. But friends kid him for being a big meat (steak) eater.

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(Revised February 1, 1995)

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2-column anniversaries	$90.00
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Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

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ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

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We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

E-mail: ccadverts@aol.com

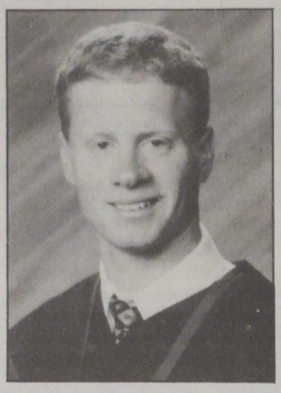
Thank You

SMIT:

It is with much appreciation that we thank you for your best wishes on our wedding anniversary. We are ever mindful of God's goodness and pray for His continued blessing.
Albert and Jane Smit.

Graduation

VAN EYK:



Congratulations to Paul van Eyk on his graduation!

PAUL VAN EYK

recently graduated from Queens University in Kingston, Ont., with a Bachelor of Commerce Honours degree (B.Comm. Honours). Prior to university Paul attended Beacon Christian High School in St. Catharines, Ont. Beginning in September Paul will commence his employment with Deloitte & Touche, Chartered Accountants in the North York office.

Paul you are to be congratulated in your achievement and we wish you many blessings in your future studies towards a C.A.

With love,
Dad and Mom, Leah,
Natasha and Ted.

Birthdays

OOSTING:
HELENA JACOBA OOSTING
(nee DE RUITER)

With thankfulness to God, we celebrate our mother's 70th birthday on June 26, 1998. With love from her children,
Bettie & Harry Vreugdenhil
Jan Oosting
Roelie & Walt Vanderlaan
and her eight grandchildren.

Please join us to celebrate this happy occasion at an open house on Saturday, June 27, 1998, from 3:30-5:30 p.m., at her home in Stirling, Ont.

Home address: 100 Campbellford Rd., Stirling, ON K0K 3E0

Personal

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Marriages

VISSER/VELDSTRA:

Wedding Text: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer.29:11).

Ralph and Ruth Veldstra of Jarvis, Ont., and Cor and Diane Visser of Hagersville, Ont., are thankful to the Lord for bringing their children together.

DAN VELDSTRA
and
ANGIE VISSER

will be united in marriage, before the Lord and His people, on Saturday, June 27, 1998, in the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, York, Ont., with Rev. John Postuma officiating.

Future address: 247 West 15th St., Hamilton, ON L9C 4B4

Anniversaries

On June 27, 1998, the Lord willing,
PETER and ANNE DE BRUYNE
(HEEREMA)
will be celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Ps.121:1,2).

We rejoice with them in how the Lord has blessed them! We are thankful for their love and support!

Love from:
Cathy & Peter Miedema — Burlington, Ont.
Jonathan, Eric, Matthew, Amy
Vivian& Alan Luymes — Peterborough, Ont.
Nicole, Julia, Jessica, Christian
Peter & Gwen DeBruyne — St. Catharines, Ont.
Jacob, Daniel, Zachary, Nicholas
Anna DeBruyne — Hamilton, Ont.

Home address: 20 Margaret St., Grimsby, ON L3M 4S1

Anniversaries

1948 June 29 1998

"Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal" (Isa. 26:4).

With joy and thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

JAN and HENNY BUITENHUIS
(nee OTTEN)

Congratulations from your children and grandchildren!

Bert & Lydia Buitenhuis — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Bryon, Deanna, Heather, Jason, Rachel
John & Debbie Buitenhuis — Grande Prairie, Alta.
Ryan, Angela, Lisa
Jenny & Eero Tuuttila — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Kris, Katrina, Mark
Irene & Gary Prezio — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Troy, Kaitlin, Cole, Rory
Henrietta & Ed Breukelman — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Aaron, Brandon, Devin
Anita & Ross Smith — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Brett, Farren

Open house on Saturday, June 27, 1998, from 1-4 p.m., at First Chr. Ref. Church, Fellowship Hall, Thunder Bay, Ont.

Address: R.R. #4, 1545 Mountain Rd., Thunder Bay, ON P7C 4Z2

Miscellaneous

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Anniversaries

1948 July 2 1998

With heartfelt thankfulness to the Lord for enriching and blessing their lives together, we, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchild wish to congratulate

HENK and HELEN JANSSEN
(nee TIMMERMAN)

on their golden wedding anniversary.

They pledged their eternal love to each other 50 years ago in a small church in Pesse, Drenthe, the Neth. Six years later they immigrated to Canada with three young children in tow and first settled in Alliston, Ont. By 1959 they moved to Brampton, Ont., and had added three more children to their family. As their family continued to grow, they never forgot the words of their wedding text: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy path."

We thank God for keeping them on His path.

Congratulations, Mom and Dad.
Love always, from your children:
Harry Janssen & Sharon McLean — Brampton, Ont.
Richard & Loralee Janssen — New Westminster, B.C.
Robert & Ina Mitchell — Georgetown, Ont.
Dennis & Hennie Fulton — Brampton, Ont.
John & Jacqueline Janssen — Utica, Mich.
William & Cathy Janssen — Barrie, Ont.

Way-to-Go, Oma and Opa.
Love, your grandchildren,
David, Jeffrey & Jen, Stephen & Jennifer, Scott, Tammy & Mark, Michael, Shawn, Derek, Daniel, Kevin, Gregory, and Joanna, and your great-grandchild Madison.

Correspondence address:
65 Rosedale Avenue W., Brampton, ON L6X 1K4

Retirement

Rev. Peter and Marrie Kranenburg.

With thanks to God, on the occasion of their retirement, we, the children and grandchildren of

REV. PETER and MARRIE KRANENBURG

wish to acknowledge the many years of love and service our parents/grandparents have given to God's kingdom through their work in church and community. Peter Kranenburg has served the Christian Reformed Church for 41 years together with Marrie, and, in addition, Marrie is retiring after 15 years of service in nursing.

We are grateful for their example of loving God and others, and wish them God's 'shalom' in this next season of life.

Peter and Marrie still reside at
191 Delrex Blvd., Georgetown, ON L7G 4E4

Classifieds

Anniversaries

1938 June 25 1998

With grateful hearts we thank the Lord for the blessings he has given our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

HENK VAN DALEN

and

ALICE POL VAN DALEN

We rejoice with them on the celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary.

Hank & Jacqueline Van Dalen — Unionville
Laurie, Rick
Marjorie & Ken Bylsma — Kitchener
Angela
Ralph & Dianne Van Dalen — Waterloo
Denise & Alan (Tristan, Mykahla), Candace
Alice Van Dalen — Kitchener

To celebrate this event, we invite friends and family to an open house on June 27, 1998, from 2-4 p.m., at the Waterloo Chr. Ref. Church, 209 Bearinger Rd., Waterloo, Ont.

Home address: 104 Biehn Dr., Kitchener, ON N2G 3W5

Congratulations to Hank and Jacqueline Van Dalen on their 60th wedding anniversary!

1948 July 7 1998

Great is Thy Faithfulness

We are thankful to God for the 50th anniversary of our parents

KOOB and ANN KOLLEN

(nee NIEUWENHUIS)

Congratulations and love from your children and grandchildren.

John & Carol Kollen — Meaford, Ont.
Althea & Hans Epp — St. Catharines, Ont.
Dennis & Hilary Kollen — Auckland, New Zealand
Dini & Slefan Ohlsson — St. Catharines, Ont.

and five grandchildren.

Home address: 269 Scott St., St. Catharines, ON L2N 1H9

Sleen, Drenthe Drayton, Ont.
1953 June 26 1998

God's blessings have been abundant. His love has been constant. His faithfulness has been enduring. We like to thank our heavenly Father for blessing our parents

TONY and ALICE SPALING

with 45 years of marriage.

Harry & Trudy — Edmonton, Alta.
Melisa, Michael, Maria
Alfred & Francis — Wingham, Ont.
Ryan, Sonya, Julia, Candace
Charles & Lorrie — Drayton, Ont.
Nicole, Nathan, Nicholas, Natasha
Andy & Louise — Hamilton, Ont.
"Bobby"
Ray & Audrey — Kitchener, Ont.
Jonathan, Alicia

To celebrate this joyful occasion, an open house social will be held from 2-4 p.m., at the Drayton Chr. Ref. Church, Drayton, Ont., on June 27, 1998. Best wishes only.

Note of celebration can be sent to: Tony and Alice Spaling, 56 Main St., Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

Obituaries

Menaldum, Fr. Stratford
the Neth. Ont.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, who shall I fear?" (Ps.27:1).

MARGARET BEIMERS

was called home on Saturday, May 30, 1998, in her 88th year, surrounded by her children.

Much loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

The children:

Nelly & Bert Tiemens — Stratford, Ont.
Alice & Les Nauta — London, Ont.
John & Ann Beimers — Exeter, Ont.
Wendy & Allison Smidts-Smith — Stratford, Ont.

The funeral service was held on June 1, 1998, at the Stratford Chr. Ref. Church, Rev. W. Dirksen officiating.

Correspondence address:
Alice Nauta, 112 Midale Cres., London. ON N5X 3C4

JOHAN DE JONG

went to be with his Lord, May 22, 1998.

We praise God for the life and example of our father and grandfather. He used his gift of music as an organist in the church for over 60 years.

He will be dearly missed by his children:

Trix & Chris Linzel
Fred & Helen DeJong
Ike & Pat DeJong
Anne Marie & Arnold Welmers
John & Rose DeJong

including 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Correspondence address:
Anne Marie Welmers, R.R. 2, Hamilton, ON L8N 2Z7

Obituaries

Nieuw Amsterdam Kentville
the Neth. N.S.

March 16, 1933 - June 3, 1998

RINNY GERRITS

(nee DOORNBOS)

On June 3, 1998, the Lord, in His infinite grace, took to Himself our dear wife, mother, sister, oma and friend. She was a woman full of life and full of God, always eager to give of herself to help others. After a brief struggle with ALS the Lord granted her His eternal healing and peace.

Beloved wife of 37 years of Bill Gerrits. She was a good friend and a loving partner.

Her children are thankful for the many years of unconditional love and Christian instruction:

Doug & Gwen Gerrits — Dartmouth, N.S.
Adrienne, Stephanie, Cameron
Joan & Dave Brady — Dashwood, Ont.
Billy, Katie, Rebecca
Byron & Sharon Gerrits — Mississauga, Ont.
Zachary
Jacqueline Gerrits — London, Ont.
Esther & Richard Voorberg — Hamilton, Ont.
Paul Gerrits — Exeter, Ont.

The funeral service was held on June 5, 1998, in the Kentville Chr. Ref. Church, Pastor Norman Visser officiating. The text chosen for the service is a testament to the faith of Rinny Gerrits:

"I lift up my eyes to the hills... where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1,2).

Correspondence address:
Bill Gerrits, R.R. #3, Centreville, Kings County, NS B0P 1J0

Obituaries

Shalom Manor
Leek Grimsby
the Neth. Ont.

Oct. 15, 1903 - May 27, 1998

Psalm 133

Mom's goal and foundation for building her earthly home for her husband and children, became reality, when the Lord called Mom to his eternal home where love and unity is real under his eternal blessing.

JANTJE (JANE) SIKKEMA

(nee SCHUIL)

Beloved wife of the late Peter Sikkema, deceased since Sept. 25, 1982.

Dear mother of:

Bert & Lissa Kamphuis — Mississauga, Ont.
Sid & Margaret Sikkema — Moorefield, Ont.
Harry & Rhea Sikkema — Mississauga, Ont.
Harry & Grace Sloots — Burlington, Ont.

Predeceased by her youngest daughter Theresa, and all her sisters and brother.

Loving grandmother of 22 grandchildren and 51 great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was held at Smith Funeral Home, Burlington, Ont., on May 29, Rev. Jerry Hoytema officiating. Interment at Halton Hills Memorial Gardens.

Correspondence address:
Sid Sikkema, R.R. #3, Moorefield, ON N0G 2K0

On June 8, 1998, after a short illness, the Lord took home

SJOERD (STUART) VANDERVAART

at the age of 85 years.

Devoted husband to Jane (Jantje) for almost 60 years. Beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather of:

Bob Vandervaart — Windsor, Ont.
Brian & Reny Vandervaart — Dartmouth, N.S.
Jellie & Peter Kingma — Innerkip, Ont.
Jeffrey, Janette
Wendy & Peter Denton — Dartmouth, N.S.
Joshua
Stuart & Mary-Lou Vandervaart — Calgary, Alta.
Cole

He is survived by two sisters: Marie DeBeer, Dokkum, the Neth., and Rennie Kamstra, Pretoria, South Africa.

A long-time resident of Woodstock, Ont., he was a very active member of the Chr. Ref. Church in that community, serving for many years as elder and stated clerk.

The funeral service was held at the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, Woodstock, Ont., Dr. John Vanderborgh and Rev. Peter Van Egmond officiating. Interment followed at the Oxford Memorial Park Cemetery. A memorial service was also held at Holland Chr. Homes in Brampton, Rev. Peter Van Egmond officiating.

Correspondence address:
J. Vandervaart, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., P401, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

Obituaries

Andijk Fenwick

1929 - 1998

On May 23, 1998, after a four-year battle with leukemia, God called home his child, our husband, father, and grandfather

PETER GUETTER

Peter lived each day full of joy, aware of the grace of God in and through his life. Thanking God for Peter's life are his wife, Johanna (Veldhuis), and his children:

John (Carolynn)
Joyce (Henry DeVries)
Ron (Julie)
David (Brigitte)
Henry (June)
Rick (Wilma)
Ken (Trish)

and 12 grandchildren.

The funeral took place on Friday, May 29, 1998, at Bethany Chr. Ref. Church, Fenwick, Ont., Rev. Robert Loerts officiating. Interment was held at Hillside Cemetery in Ridgeville.

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5)

Correspondence address:
P.O. Box 291, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0

Andijk Fenwick
the Neth. Ont.

May 5, 1929 - May 23, 1998

After fighting a courageous battle with leukemia since 1994, the Lord took home His child and our dear brother

PETER GUETTER

at the age of 69.

He was a vital part of our family. His spontaneous love for life reflected a wonderfully-close walk with God. He will be sadly missed, but knowing he rejoices with Jesus is our great comfort. May the Lord strengthen Johanna, the children and grand-children.

Chris & Sue Guetter — Clinton, Ont.
Rita Lazet — Brampton, Ont.
Jean & John De Jong — Kitchener, Ont.
Harry & Jopie Guetter — Flagstaff, Arizona
Theresa Bakker — London, Ont.

Teachers

DUNDAS, Ont.: Calvin Chr. School requests applications for a **half-time teacher aide position for Grade 1**. Preference will be given to applicants with a teacher's certificate. Please submit applications to:

Mr. Jack Zondag
Calvin Christian School
542 Ofield Rd. N., R.R. #2
Dundas, ON L9H 5E2
For further information call
(905) 627-1411

This position will be filled a.s.a.p.

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

Summerfest: A "Learning Vacation" for the Whole Family

Join Christian friends and families for a week of learning, fellowship and relaxation on Calvin's campus.

"Crossing Cultures Through Words & Images"
July 13-18, 1998

Gary Schmidt,
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"Not For Children Only: Reading Children's Literature as a Grown-up"

Larry Herzberg, Professor of Chinese and Japanese:
"Daily Life in China and Japan"

$225 for adults (18 and over),
$175 for teens (13-17),
$85 for grade school (6-12),
$60 for pre-school (5 and under).
Meals and lodging included.
(Off-campus rates also available.)

Summerfest West Rehoboth, NM

Join us in the beautiful Southwest as we explore nature, art and culture as taught by Christian instructors July 6-11, 1998.

Courses:
Elmer Yazzie and Carl Huisman: *"Navajo Culture and Art"*
Mike De Young and Davis Young: *"Navajoland Geology"*
Don Tamminga: *"Peoples and Cultures of the Southwest"*

Other activities:
mountain biking, jewelry making, hiking, rappelling/ropes course, campfires, Indian dances, rug weaving, field trips (Canyon DeChelly and Window Rock historic sites.)

For more information, call 616-957-6801 or email *rvbroek@calvin.edu*

www.calvin.edu/summerfest

CALVIN College

Obituaries

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom.8:37).

On May 18, 1998, the Lord called home

RITSKE (RITS) VAN DER WOUDE

one day before his 67th birthday, after a short battle with cancer.
Husband of Bep for 3 1/2 years.
Father and grandfather of:
Joanne & Larry Spreitzer — Spokane, Wash.
Larry Jr.
Ralph — Surrey, B.C.
Henry — Surrey, B.C.
Brother (in-law) of:
Jenny & Fred Faber — Abbotsford, B.C.
George & Janet Van der Woude — Surrey, B.C.
John & Corrie Van der Woude — Prince George, B.C.
Gerda Van der Woude — Langley, B.C.
Predeceased by brothers Henk (1953), and Eelco (1997), his first wife for 30 years, Henny (1986), his second wife for 4 years, Ruth (1993), and his parents.
The funeral was held on May 23, 1998, from the Chr. Ref. Church in Kelowna, B.C., with Rev. Simon De Bruin officiating.
Correspondence address:
4058 Lansdowne Road, Prince George, BC V2N 2R6

Job Opportunities

Community Christian Reformed Church
Kitchener, Ont.

is prayerfully seeking a second

Ordained Pastor

whose main responsibilities will be managing large existing youth programs for our rapidly expanding congregation in Kitchener, Ont.
Please respond **before June 30, 1998.** A detailed job description and congregational profile are available from:

Search Committee
Community CRC
1275 Bleams Rd., R.R. #2, Kitchener, ON N2G 3W5
Phone: (519) 743-9482 or Fax: (519) 743-4434

Director of Youth Ministries

The Second Chr. Ref. Church of Brampton, Ont., will have a position available in Sept. 1998, for a full-time **Director of Youth Ministries**. We are looking for a person with the gifts and skills to lead an established youth program. It includes working in a team environment with our Pastor, youth elders and other leaders. We seek a person committed to help our youth serve the Lord. Both ordained or un-ordained persons with university education are invited to apply. Full job description and church profile available. Please send your letters of interest to the **Clerk of Council, Mr. Jim Visser, 3 Trotters Lane, Brampton, ON L6Y 1B5**

Teachers

NEERLANDIA, Alta.: Neerlandia Public Chr. School, 150 km NW of Edmonton, Alta., requires an **Associate Principal**. Our school is non-denominational, is part of Pembina Hills Reg. Div. #7, and has about 220 students, K-10. Send resume and statement of vision and beliefs to:

Don Wielinga, Principal
Box 10
Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0
Fax: (403) 674-2927
Phone: (403) 674-5581
E-mail: wielinga@telusplanet.net

Miscellaneous

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.

CRC Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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Job Opportunities

Development Director

Edmonton Christian Schools has an opening for a **Development Director.** The Director must be able to translate the financial goals of ECS into workable plans, match promotional activities with fundraising efforts, and be an articulate speaker and writer. The Director needs to have a clear understanding of Christian education and must be able to share the vision of ECS within the different support groups of the school community. **Part-time and full-time applications will be considered.** Closing date for applications is **June 30, 1998,** or until a suitable candidate is found. Please direct inquiries and/or resumes to:

Hans Van Ginhoven, Superintendent
Edmonton Christian Schools
13470 Fort Road
Edmonton, AB T5A 1C5
Phone: (403) 476-6281 or Fax: (403) 478-1728

Rehoboth Christian Nursery School
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has a unique part-time opportunity for two qualified people beginning **September 1998.**

Supervisor/teacher: requires ECE diploma, min. 3-5 years experience, excellent references. Must demonstrate excellent people skills and illustrate a personal understanding of how children can be encouraged to develop Christian characteristics as appropriate in a nursery school setting.

Teacher's Assistant: requires experience with children, excellent people skills, dedicated, and willing to work as a team with the supervisor. Must illustrate a personal understanding of Christian living and be interested in further developing professional skills.

Please forward your resume to: R.C.N.S., Box 388, Etobicoke, ON M9C 4V3. Fax: (416) 622-9075.
For more information call (905) 567-0508.

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Experienced full-time hygienist needed to care for patients while our current hygienist is on maternity leave. This is a six-month employment opportunity in a Christian environment with a progressive dental office in **Huntsville, Ont.**, beginning in August 1998.

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Classifieds

Miscellaneous | **Miscellaneous** | **Miscellaneous**

Community Development Workers

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

The **Christian Reformed World Relief Committee** (**CRWRC**) is a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church. It has been active in development and relief work around the world for 35 years and is currently working with some 135 partners in 30 countries.

CRWRC has several long-term positions available in **West Africa** and **Asia** and is interested in dialogue with individuals who meet the following qualifications:

- are sincerely Christian, with a Reformed perspective;
- are committed to expressing their faith through a community development ministry;
- hold a college or university diploma or degree;
- have education and/or experience in community development work (domestic or international);
- are willing to relocate and commit to a two or three year term.

Preference will be given to those with overseas experience and linguistic skills.

Please submit your resume by **July 27, 1998**, to:

Director of Personnel
Christian Reformed Church in North America
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49560-0500
(616) 224-5881/Fax (616) 224-5895

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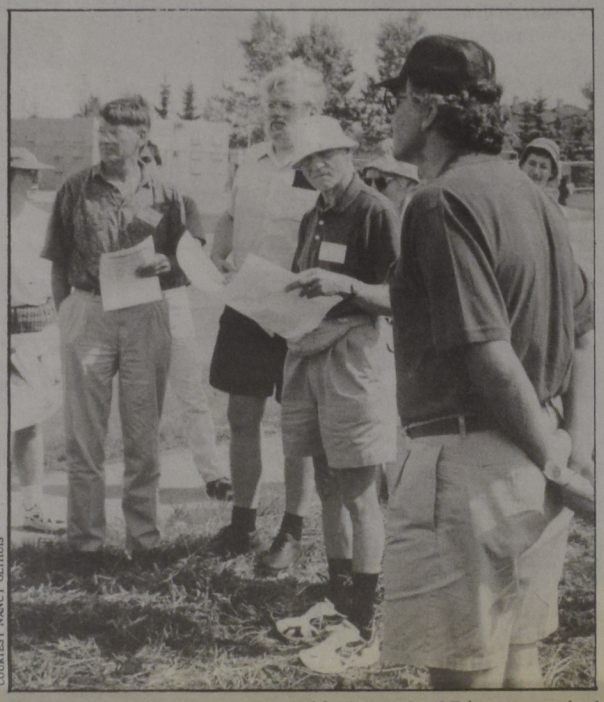
First-ever conference for Christian environmental professionals held in Edmonton

Alan Doerksen

EDMONTON — The first conference designed for Christian environmental professionals was presented at The King's University College in Edmonton in late May, attracting more than 65 delegates from across Canada and the U.S. with a common concern to care for creation. One participant called the conference "a breath of hope in the midst of practical problems," reports the college's communication co-ordinator Nancy Olthuis.

Keynote speaker Dr. Calvin DeWitt, professor of environmental studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, presented biblical principles of caring for creation. He talked of earthkeeping, encouraging fruitfulness, and the Sabbath. He urged participants to let these principles inform their science, ethics and professional practice, reports Olthuis.

DeWitt is a well-known lecturer and author on Christianity and the environment, and is also director of the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies.



COURTESY NANCY OLTHUIS

Conference participants took a field trip north of Edmonton to look at urban/rural land conversion issues. From left, Jim Visser, Theodore Plantinga, CC columnist Bert Hielema, and Dr. Harry Spaling, a conference organizer.

Information and ethics

Dr. Fred Van Dyke, a professor of biology at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, discussed how being scientifically informed and ethically committed shapes and influences the practice of a Christian environmental professional. Van Dyke has written extensively about these issues, including in his 1996 book *Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship.*

Conference workshops examined how principles discussed by Van Dyke and DeWitt can be applied to specific environmental issues such as climate change, wildlife at risk and the role of the law in caring for creation. The conference included case studies and field trips to demonstrate how Christian environmental professionals can deal with ecological concerns in their daily work.

Encouragement and balance

Participants were encouraged by the event. "Just being together with other environmental professionals was valuable," said hydraulic engineer Bill Stolte of the University of Saskatchewan. "We need each other to [get] a balanced perspective."

A number of ethical concerns were raised about professional environmental practice, especially as it affects the planning, development and management of resources. One outcome was a request for future conferences, and continued communication of participants via e-mail discussion groups or newsletters to establish à network for Christian environmental professionals.

The conference, co-sponsored with The King's by the American Scientific Affiliation and AGRA-Earth & Environmental Ltd., attracted environmental educators as well as landscape architects, lawyers, consultants and engineers.

'Preach-in' against poverty held in Washington

Alan Doerksen

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In an effort to put poor people back on the map of American politics, an all-day "preach-in" featuring some of America's best-known preachers was held in Washington, D.C., on June 1. The preach-in, which featured speakers such as writer and scholar Tony Campolo and Rev. James Forbes of Riverside Church in New York City, was organized by Call to Renewal, an American network of churches and faith-based agencies committed to overcoming poverty and racism.

One focus of the preach-in was recent welfare reforms in the U.S., which attempt to get people off welfare rolls and get them working or into a training program. Call to Renewal convener Jim Wallis is critical of the reforms and says, "The test of the success of welfare reform is not simply how many people we can get off the welfare rolls, as some politicians would have us believe, but how many people will be lifted out of poverty."

COURTESY CAROL PENNELLY/CALL TO RENEWAL

Jim Wallis

Wallis is concerned that America's poor people "have been quietly sliding out of sight and out of mind.... The media's focus on politics and morality has been restricted to alleged White House sex scandals. But the greater drama unfolding before us has been the struggle of millions of American families trying to move off welfare and out of poverty. In our discussions of public morality, it is important that we remember that morality is also about how we treat the poor, which Jesus said was the true test of faith."

Tie-in to Pentecost

The preach-in was one of several activities presented by Call to Renewal during the season of Pentecost. The Biblical tie-in is that after the original Pentecost, early Christians prayed, taught and shared their bread with the poor, states the office of Call to Renewal. It was hosted by Congressman Tony Hall, in the Rayburn House Office Building, and ran from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. on June 1. Hall had just returned from a trip to the Sudan, and reported on poverty worldwide.

Two days before the preach-in, Call to Renewal hosted a day-long clothing and food drive in Washington to assist people making the transition from welfare to work. This event also featured gospel music and brief messages from local pastors and Christian leaders addressing welfare reforms in the light of the message of Pentecost. Participants built a "Mountain of Manna" — a large collection of donated food, which was sent to emergency food outlets.

Wallis described the clothing and food drive as "a D.C.-area version of a profoundly-needed, ecumenical grassroots movement that is bringing Christians of all denominations and ethnic backgrounds together to rise to the challenge of welfare reform."

News Digest

Blind people can hunt

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld. — It's no joke: the Newfoundland government has agreed to issue hunting licences to the blind and disabled. "For blind people, it's a happy story," says Jim Sanders, vice-president of the Canadian national Institute for the Blind. "It's a form of equality and independence."

Under the new law, which takes effect next year, blind people won't actually shoot Newfoundland's moose and caribou. Those who can't lift a rifle or see a moose will designate someone else to shoot for them. But the license will be in the blind person's name, and he or she will have the right to the meat of the hunt, reports the *Toronto Star.*

Dog Bite Prevention Week

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — Mail carriers gathered in Washington recently to kick off "Dog Bite Prevention Week" (June 1 to 6), which was proclaimed by the Postal Service and the Humane Society of the U.S. to reduce the number of people bitten each year.

"The Postal Service isn't anti-dog, it's pro-responsibility," explained postal vice-president Michael Shinay. He urged pet owners to confine and train their dogs to reduce the number of bites.

The post office dog bite toll averages seven a day. Among the 4.5 million Americans bitten by dogs last year, 2,708 were letter carriers, says Shinay.

Thief apologizes

STOCKHOLM — A Swedish car thief wrote a letter of apology to his unemployed victim asking for forgiveness, but did not return the stolen car, reports the *Globe and Mail.*

"Sorry that I needed to 'borrow' your car, but I was in great need of it," the thief wrote to 20-year-old Matthias Sunefjord of southern Sweden. "I hope you can forgive me."

The thief, who stole the white Saab from outside Sunefjord's home recently, enclosed the owner's unemployment claims with his letter. Sunefjord said he was glad to get the papers back, but notes his fishing gear and snowboard were not returned.